

"Reduction of niobium oxide with gaseous reducing agents can be conducted in an agitated or static bed, such as a rotary kiln, a fluidized bed, a rack kiln, or in a sliding batt kiln. If a static bed is used, the bed depth should not exceed 5 to 15 cm, so that the reducing gas can penetrate the bed. Greater bed depths are possible if a bed packing is employed through which the gas flows from below,"

(see Shekhter, col. 7, lines 37 to 43),

The presently claimed invention provides an economical process to get metal powders with reproducible properties in an easy and efficient manner. The cited reference leads the man skilled in the art in a complete different direction because it suggested a reduction with gaseous metals that is technical complex and expensive.

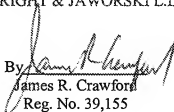
Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 50-0624, under Order No. NY-DNAG-313-US.

Respectfully submitted

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